by Dylan Horrocks

Pickle

№ 6

FOR MATURE READERS

A DELICIOUS FEAST OF NEW ZEALAND CARTOONING

STILL ONLY $2.95 $3.50 CAN

Black Eye

Pickle

Nº 6, FEBRUARY 1995

by **Dylan Horrocks**
editor **Dolan Hicks (mrs.)**
publisher **Michel Vrána**
promotional assistant **Rob Veri**

Publication Design and Cover Colours by **Dylan Horrocks and Michel Vrána**

Back cover: Moxie and Toxie Enjoy the Country Air by Sam Zabel

"Even more than money, an artist likes to be loved."
—Joe Simon

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
Thanks to the Fleming clan, especially David and Clemency.

DEDICATION
This issue is dedicated to Terry Fleming, with all my love and admiration.

BACK ISSUES
Issues 1-5 are available for $2.95 U.S. / $3.50 Canadian from the address below. Canadian customers please pay in Canadian funds, all others, please pay in US funds. All orders postpaid for ground mail, please add 50% for air mail service.

PICKLE®6, February 1995. Published by Black Eye Productions, 338 Kribs Street, Cambridge, Ontario, Canada N3C 3J3, tel: (519) 658-0416 fax: (519) 658-2407.

All characters, stories and art are copyright © 1994 Dylan Horrocks.

PRINTED IN CANADA

Letter from Hicksville.

Good gracious, it's that time again! Once again, I sit down at the kitchen table with some chocolate eclairs and a hot pot of Earl Grey to look over a new issue of Pickle and write my usual little patter. I hope this issue finds you all well and happy. Down here in Hicksville, the season has turned to Summer — long warm evenings, barbecues, milkshakes and all that.

But I mustn't go on about the weather all day! This issue, we're very pleased to include some of your letters, the first time we've had room to since issue 3. I'm afraid we've got rather a backlog to get through, so I apologise to all those whose letters we've left out or edited down a little; we hope to be caught up by the next issue.

On a more personal note, I must say that receiving your letters is one of the most delightful aspects of editing Pickle. I particularly enjoy hearing about the places you live, your cats (hello to Jen's little darlings) and the adventures you fill your days with. So keep those letters coming, dear ones!

Fondly yours,

Dolan Hicks

Dolan Hicks (mrs.)

Dear Mrs. Hicks...

Dolan Hicks (Mrs.) c/o Pickle, P.O. Box 5512, Wellesley St., Auckland, New Zealand

...So—why did you name your comic 'PICKLE'? Tell me the story. My cats are fine. Sadie and Jekyl. I have another one—a kitten named "Jiffy Squid"—she's named from a line Screamin' Jay Hawkins has in the movie MYSTERY TRAIN...

Jen "Pez Girl" McCabe
Seattle, WA

Good question, Jen. Would anyone like to hazard a guess? A prize for the best answer! Send in your guesses to Mrs. Hicks.

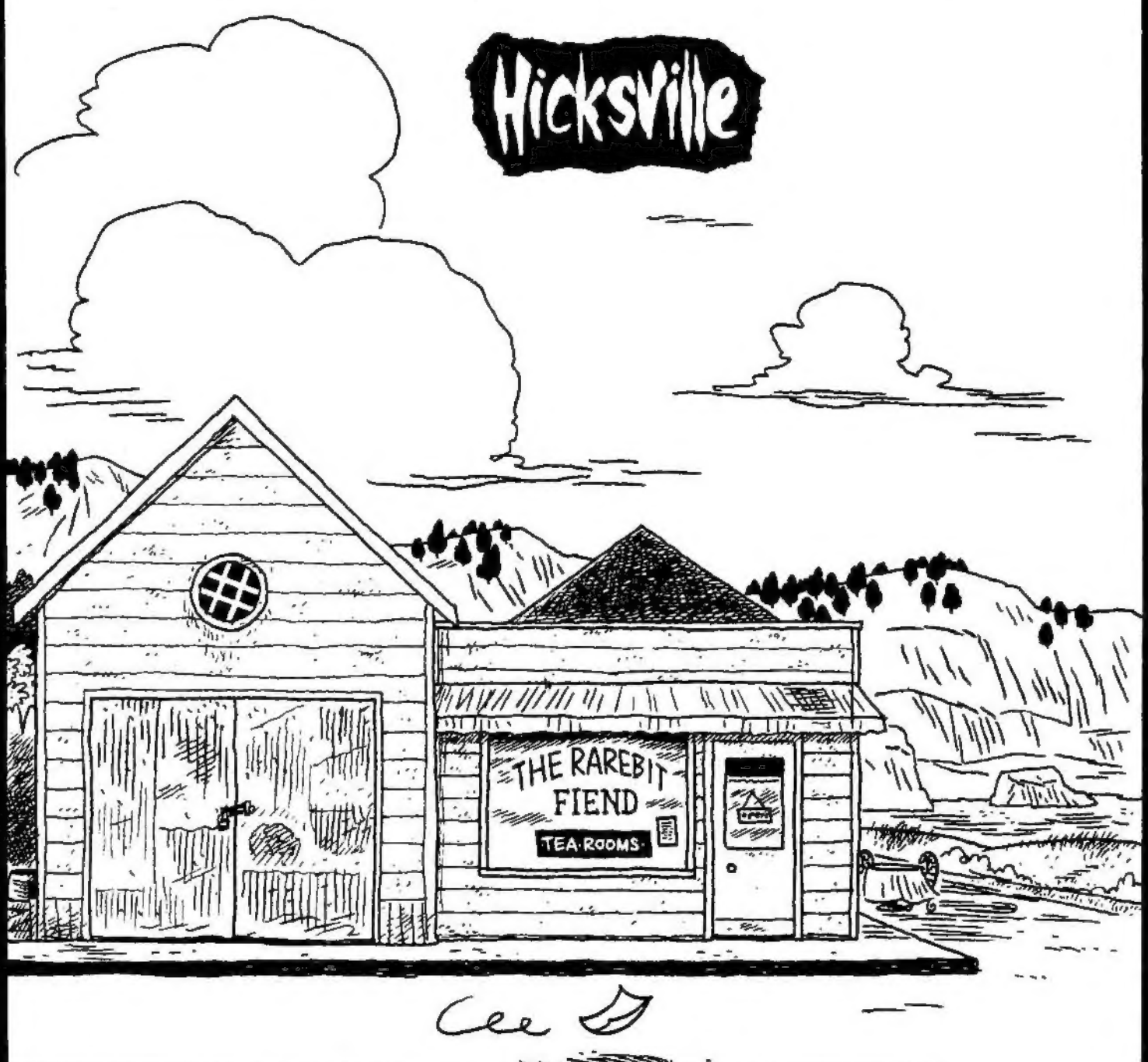
I'd just like to point out a mystake (?) on your behalf (is that how I should put it?). As editor you failed to see the blatant ignoramousness of Mr. Horrocks. There has never been a female prime minister of NZ and if there has you'll probably sue me for libel. I have enclosed my mini-comic for you to plug (K-POW K-POW HAHAHA I'll explain that one later!). It's called THE STORY OF THE SCREAMING BALLOON THINGEE. Thanks for wasting your ink on me.

James R.R. Dens-Merritt (Sir)
Bethelle Beach, Auckland, NZ

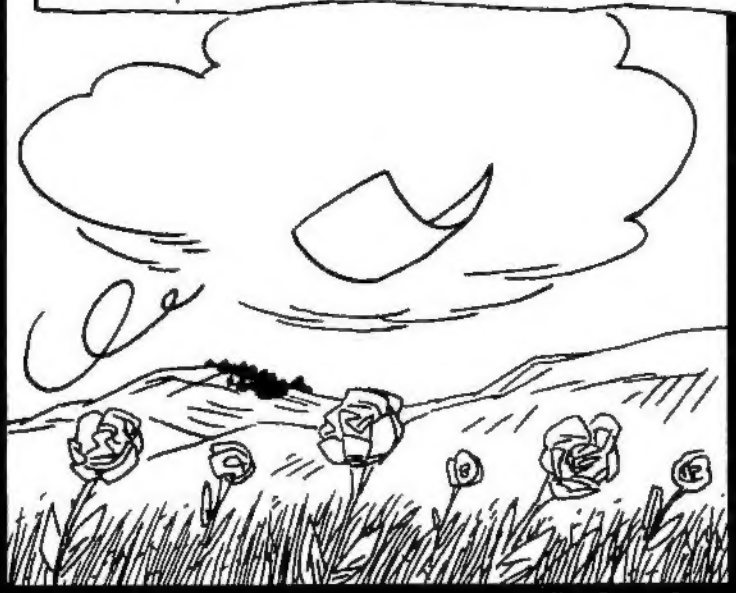
James is the youthful but talented author of* THE STORY OF THE SCREAMING BALLOON THINGEE, *a very funny mini-comic drawn in two hours and photocopied at school. Anyone wishing to purchase one should send NZ $1.00 to James Dens-Merritt, PO Box 68, Waikakere, Auckland, New Zealand.

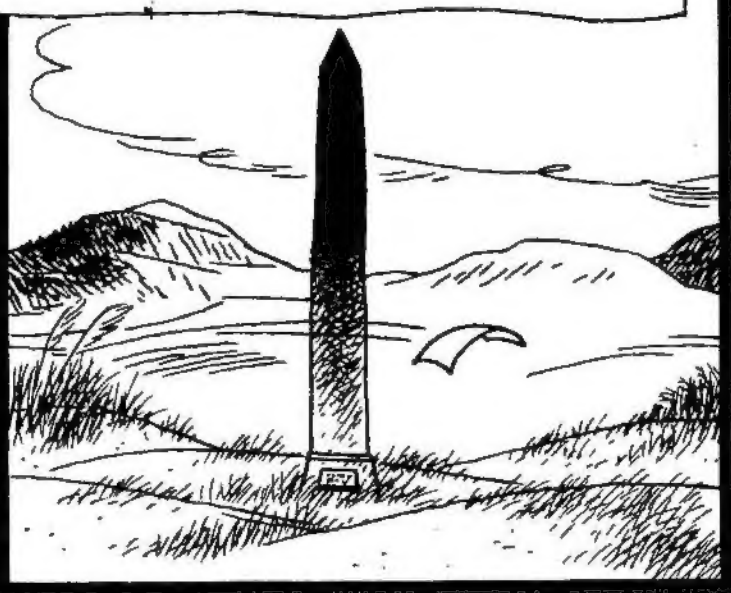
(continues on page 24)

Dear Bud,
I'm writing to you from Hicksville - the birthplace of Dick Burger. I would send this by modem, but my laptop crapped out the minute I got here. And there isn't even a fax-machine in town, so it's snail mail, I'm afraid. God knows how long it will take - this really is the ass-end of universe, remote even by local standards. I think we're closer to the 7th Pole than we are to Australia (not that you'd guess from the weather - it's in the 90's every day - when it rains the roads steam).



Anyway - Hicksville. It took me two days of trudging across fields to get here (the bus from Auckland dumped me miles away). In the end I must have passed out from heatstroke in a field belonging to Farmer Dobbs, a homocidal maniac with a loaded shotgun & a dog called Fang, because I woke up (briefly) to the sight of a cross between Lassie & Venom preparing to rip my face off. That was enough to knock me out again & I guess Farmer Dobbs carried me the rest of the way into town, leaving me with Mrs. Hicks, a very twee old Aunt Mary-type, but who has the most amazing collection of obscure comic books I've ever seen.





I don't think Mrs. Hicks is quite on this planet, but she's the only friendly face I've encountered here yet. No-one else will talk to me - as soon as they hear Dick Burger's name, they all make excuses and disappear. And the looks I get - I feel like Jim Shooter at Jack Kirby's wake or something. I don't know why everyone here hates Burger so much, but I doubt it could be worth having made this nightmarish trip just to find out...

I figure I'll stay for another few days, to recover from the ordeal & just in case I can get some sense out of the locals, but then I'm getting out of here. The things I do for a scoop! I hope you appreciate this, Bud!

– Leonard Batts

P.S. I can't even get a damn coffee here – it's all tea, tea, tea. Death to tea!

HEY!
COME ON OUT! SHOW YOURSELF!
Yes.
You do?
An uncomfortable silence followed, until it became clear that Hone Heke intended no further clarification...
Then the stranger invited them both to share his mo tea and introd were made...
My name is Alfred. I am a surveyor by trade, for the N.Z. Co.
WHOEVER YOU ARE - YOU CAN QUIT IT WITH THIS MYSTERIOUS BULLSHIT! I DON'T CARE ABOUT YOUR FUCKING WEIRDO STRIP! JUST CUT IT OUT!
SHIT

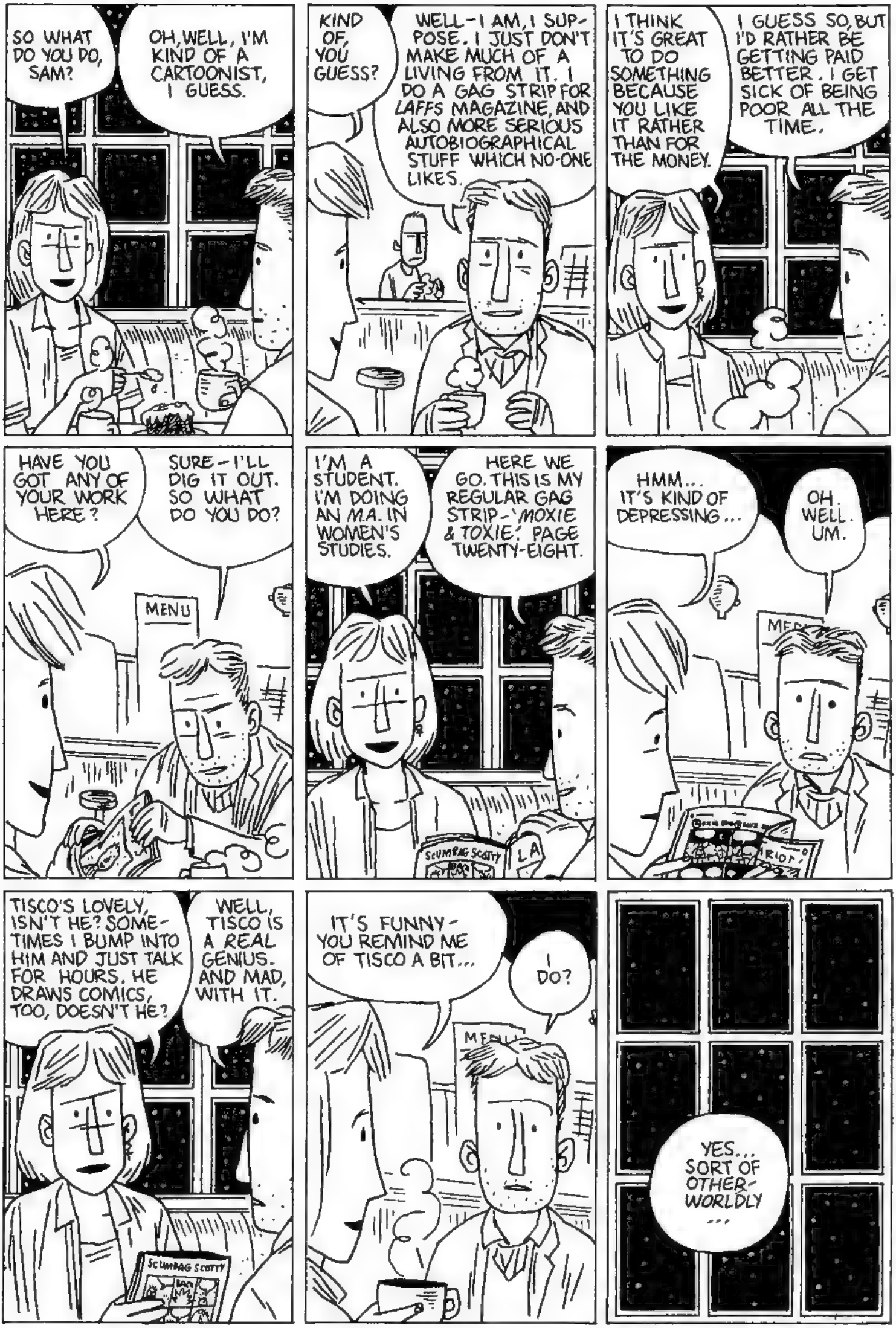
HOW'S THE GARDEN COMING ALONG?
NOT TOO GOOD...THERE WERE SPECIES IN THERE THAT TOOK YEARS TO FIND AND TO GET THEM ESTABLISHED. I'VE SAVED SOME, BUT...
HAVE YOU SPOKEN TO DANTON YET?
ILLY
...
I THINK HE'S PRETTY UPSET.
JESUS, SAM! GET A LIFE OF YOUR OWN, WOULD YOU?
SORRY. I JUST WANT TO GO SLOW. YOU CAN TELL HIM IF YOU LIKE THAT I DIDN'T COME BACK FOR HIM. I WANT TO BE ON MY OWN RIGHT NOW.
WELL, THAT'LL CHEER HIM UP.
CAN'T HELP THAT.

HULLO - WHO'S THIS?
OH SHIT.
YOU KNOW THIS GUY?
JUST SOME GEEK FROM AMERICA - A "COMICS CRITIC" HE SAYS - COME TO WRITE ABOUT DICK BURGER...
HI!
I'M JUST OFF TO DROWN MYSELF.
...
HI - I'M SAM.
LEONARD BATTS - 'COMICS WORLD' MAGAZINE.
YOU'RE LEONARD BATTS? I JUST READ YOUR BOOK ON KIRBY.
YOU DID?
SURE - NOT BAD... BIT SOFT ON MARVEL, I THOUGHT, BUT NOT BAD...
UH - THANKS. YOU READ COMICS, THEN?
ARE YOU KIDDING? YOU'RE IN HICKSVILLE, NOW, MATE...
COME ON - I'LL BUY YOU A CUPPA TEA -

SO YOU KNOW DICK BURGER?
OF COURSE I DO. WE PRACTICALLY GREW UP TOGETHER- WELL, HE'S A FEW YEARS OLDER THAN ME, BUT HICKSVILLE'S PRETTY SMALL AND WE WERE CLOSE ENOUGH. WE PLAYED TOGETHER, READ COMICS TOGETHER - ALL THE USUAL STUFF...
CLOSED
THE KRANCOLY FIEND
TEA ROOMS
DO YOU STILL KEEP IN TOUCH AT ALL?
SURE - NOW AND THEN. I GUESS I'M THE ONLY ONE HERE THAT DOES THESE DAYS THOUGH I THINK MRS. HICKS STILL SENDS THE ODD LETTER. I DOUBT HE REPLIES.
SO TELL ME - HOW COME EVERYONE HERE HATES HIM SO MUCH? YOU AND MRS. HICKS ARE THE ONLY PEOPLE I'VE MET WHO ARE PREPARED TO TALK TO ME...
WELL... IT'S A LITTLE COMPLICATED. I DON'T KNOW IF I CAN EXPLAIN...
HERE'S YOUR TEA.
THANKS, DANTON.
EXCUSE ME - COULD I ORDER A COFFEE?
NO.
?
DON'T MIND HIM, HE'S NURSING A BROKEN HEART... ANYWAY, ABOUT DICK; A WHILE AGO, DICK AND I SPENT SOME TIME TOGETHER.
...
I'VE JUST BEEN WORKING ON A STRIP ABOUT IT. HOW ABOUT I SHOW YOU WHAT I'VE DONE SO FAR?
I'LL JUST GO AND GET IT. BACK IN A MO!
UH... SURE. OK.
YOUR TEA'S GETTING COLD.

STARS
ALL THOSE BILLIONS OF SUNS AND PLANETS OUT THERE, HOW MANY MORE SUPPORT INTELLIGENT LIFE? AND WILL THE NEXT VISITORS TO EARTH BE FRIENDLY?
I DON'T KNOW, DARLING, BUT RIGHT NOW THE NIGHT SKY SEEMS SO BEAUTIFUL, AS IF ALL THE STARS WERE SHINING JUST FOR US...
by SAM ZABEL
IT'S SO BEAUTIFUL..! IF ONLY MY LIFE COULD BE MORE LIKE THAT- LOVE, GLAMOROUS WOMEN, ALWAYS SAYING THE RIGHT LINE...
EXIT
THE END
=SIGH=
MY LIFE ALWAYS SEEMS SO MESSY... STUCK BETWEEN UNATTAINABLE, ILL-DEFINED DESIRES AND COMPLICATED OBLIGATIONS AND PROBLEMS...

I ALWAYS GET ALL EMOTIONAL AT THE MOVIES – WHAT A BEAUTIFUL FILM!
OOF! SORRY!
OH! EXCUSE ME.
I KNOW HER! I'M SURE I KNOW HER!
COMING ATTRACTION
EXCUSE ME – DON'T I KNOW YOU FROM SOME-WHERE?
HOW ORIGINAL...
NO, NO, I MEAN IT! DO YOU KNOW TISCO GEORGE?
TISCO? SURE. HOW DO YOU KNOW HIM?
OH, I'VE KNOWN TISCO FOR YEARS.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING NOW? WE COULD GET A COFFEE.
UH... YEAH, OKAY...
SURE! WHY NOT?
AHEM
LET'S TRY DKD'S, I'M SALLY.
SAM. HI.
GOD, WASN'T THAT A LOUSY MOVIE?!
...
SHOW


SO WHAT DO YOU DO, SAM?
OH, WELL, I'M KIND OF A CARTOONIST, I GUESS.
KIND OF, YOU GUESS?
WELL - I AM, I SUPPOSE. I JUST DON'T MAKE MUCH OF A LIVING FROM IT. I DO A GAG STRIP FOR LAFFS MAGAZINE, AND ALSO MORE SERIOUS AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STUFF WHICH NO-ONE LIKES.
I THINK IT'S GREAT TO DO SOMETHING BECAUSE YOU LIKE IT RATHER THAN FOR THE MONEY.
I GUESS SO, BUT I'D RATHER BE GETTING PAID BETTER. I GET SICK OF BEING POOR ALL THE TIME.
HAVE YOU GOT ANY OF YOUR WORK HERE?
SURE - I'LL DIG IT OUT. SO WHAT DO YOU DO?
MENU
I'M A STUDENT. I'M DOING AN M.A. IN WOMEN'S STUDIES.
HERE WE GO. THIS IS MY REGULAR GAG STRIP - 'MOXIE & TOXIE'. PAGE TWENTY-EIGHT.
SCUMBAG SCOTTY
HMM... IT'S KIND OF DEPRESSING...
OH. WELL. UM.
RIOT
TISCO'S LOVELY, ISN'T HE? SOMETIMES I BUMP INTO HIM AND JUST TALK FOR HOURS. HE DRAWS COMICS, TOO, DOESN'T HE?
WELL, TISCO IS A REAL GENIUS. AND MAD, WITH IT.
SCUMBAG SCOTTY
IT'S FUNNY - YOU REMIND ME OF TISCO A BIT...
I DO?
YES... SORT OF OTHER-WORLDLY ...

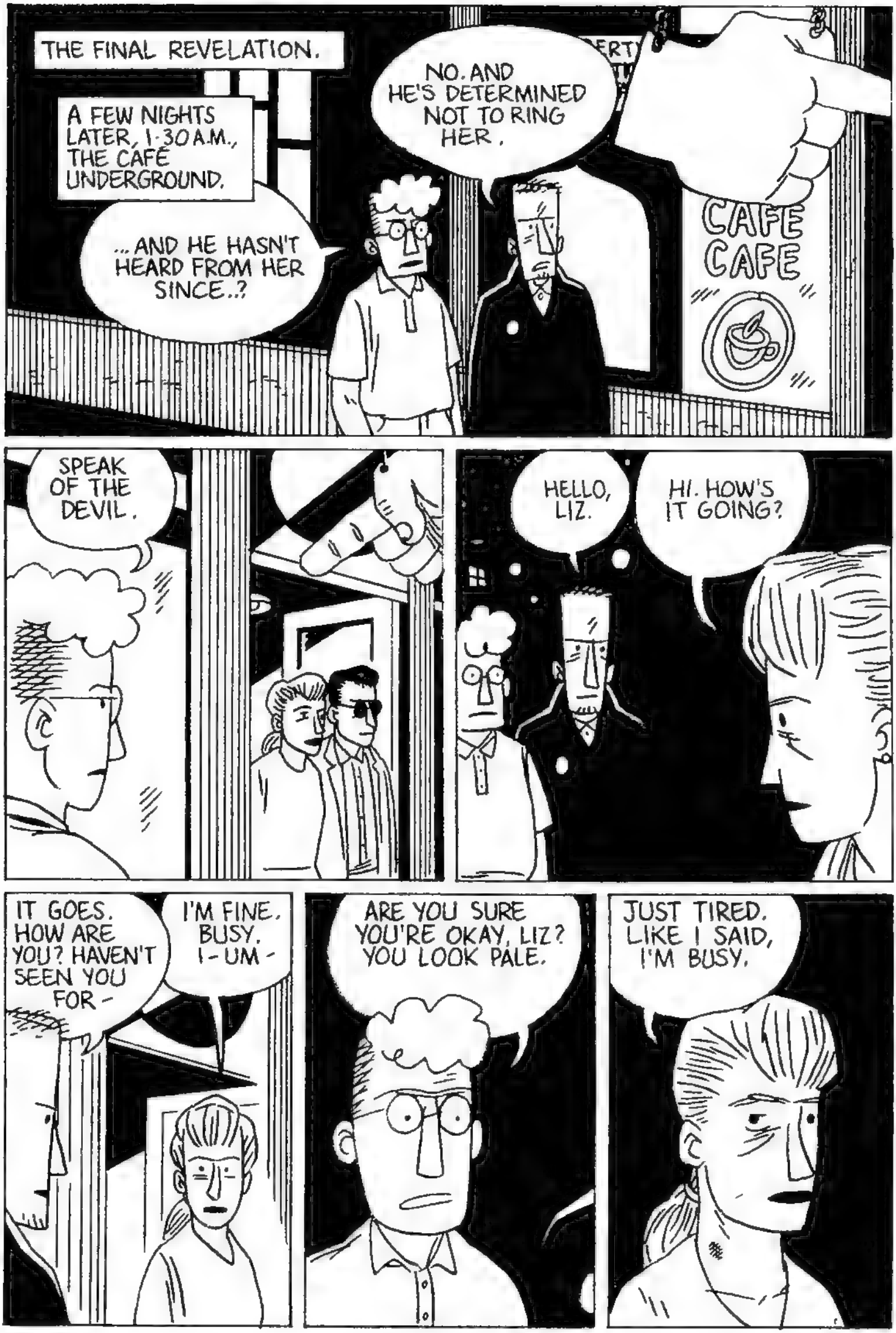
"OTHERWORLDLY?"
OTHER-WORLDLY ISN'T THE WORD FOR IT. HE'S A FUCKING LOONEY.
I DON'T KNOW - I'VE ALWAYS FOUND TISCO TO BE A PROFOUND AND COMPLEX THINKER.
GOOD GRIEF.
M
T
YEAH WELL- THAT SAYS IT ALL, REALLY, DOESN'T IT?
HOWEVER, SAM, I MUST SAY YOU'RE HARDLY ON TISCO'S LEVEL. HE'S A LATERAL, ORIGINAL-THINKING GENIUS, WHEREAS YOU -
YES, THANK YOU TOXIE. WHAT DO YOU WANT, ANYWAY?
M
T
MORE TO THE POINT IS WHAT YOU WANT, DEAR SAM.
HINT: IT'S DOING AN M.A. IN WOMEN'S STUDIES.
LAY OFF IT! YOU GUYS ARE ALWAYS JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS.
T
M
OF COURSE WE ARE - YOU'RE ALWAYS SO PRE-DICTABLE.
SO WHAT IF IT'S TRUE? YOU GOT A PROBLEM WITH THAT?!!
ON THE CONTRARY - WE'RE JUST IN THIS FOR THE LAUGHS.
M
T
SHIT! THAT'S OUR PHONE!
RING
RING

RING
SHIT SHIT SHIT...
RING
RING
CLICK!
UH OH
RING
RING
RING
RING
@#!
IN TEN WORDS OR LESS, GIVE ME ONE GOOD REASON WHY I SHOULD NOT HAVE YOU TORTURED AND KILLED...
TWO WORDS, BABY: DICK BURGER!
THAT'S FIVE, PUNK. WHAT ABOUT "DICK BURGER"?
!
THIS IS DICK BURGER.
WELL THEN, LISTEN UP, DICK - YOU HAVE ONE WORD LEFT AND IT HAD BETTER BE PRETTY GOOD OR -
er- I'LL TAKE THAT, LISA ...
SORRY, LISA...
MORD
...
HELLO? DICK?
SAM?

SAM M'MAN! WHO'S THE CHICK WITH ATTITUDE?
SORRY, DICK. THAT WAS MY FLATMATE LISA.
PHEW! FOR A MINUTE I THOUGHT YOU WERE SHACKED UP WITH LORENA BOBBITT!
WELL, SHE HAS A POINT, DICK - IT'S 3 A.M.
COME ON, SAM - TIME IS RELATIVE, AS CAPTAIN TOMORROW SAYS; LISTEN UP - I GOT A HELL OF AN INVITATION FOR YA.
I'M HAVING A PARTY AT THE SHERATON TOMORROW NIGHT - EVERYONE'LL BE THERE: PUBLISHERS, AGENTS, LOADS OF CHICKS - WHY NOT COME ALONG?
YOU'RE IN NEW ZEALAND?
WELL NO, ACTUALLY I'M 10,000 FEET OVER THE PACIFIC OCEAN, BUT TOMORROW I'LL BE IN NEW ZEALAND.
WELL GEE, DICK... er... HOW LONG FOR?
OH I DUNNO - A WEEK OR SO... ANYWAY, COME ALONG - IT'LL BE FUN. AND BRING SOME WORK - YOU NEVER KNOW, EH?
What a masterpiece!
WHAT CAN WE OFFER YOU FOR THIS STRIP?
Wow! at azi
HOW PERFECTLY SPLENDID!

To Be Continued...

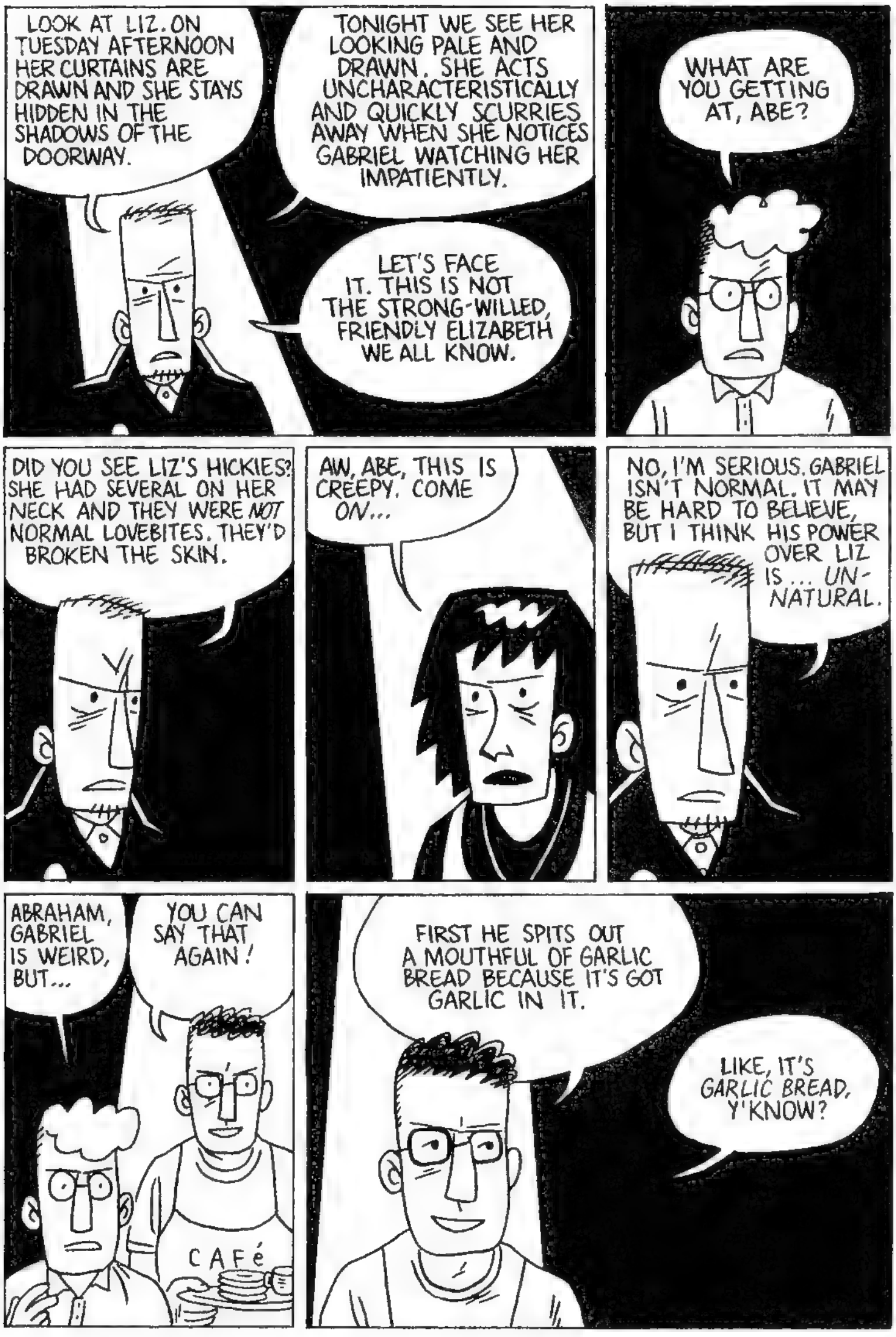
Café Underground.
Chapter Five:
Gabriel.

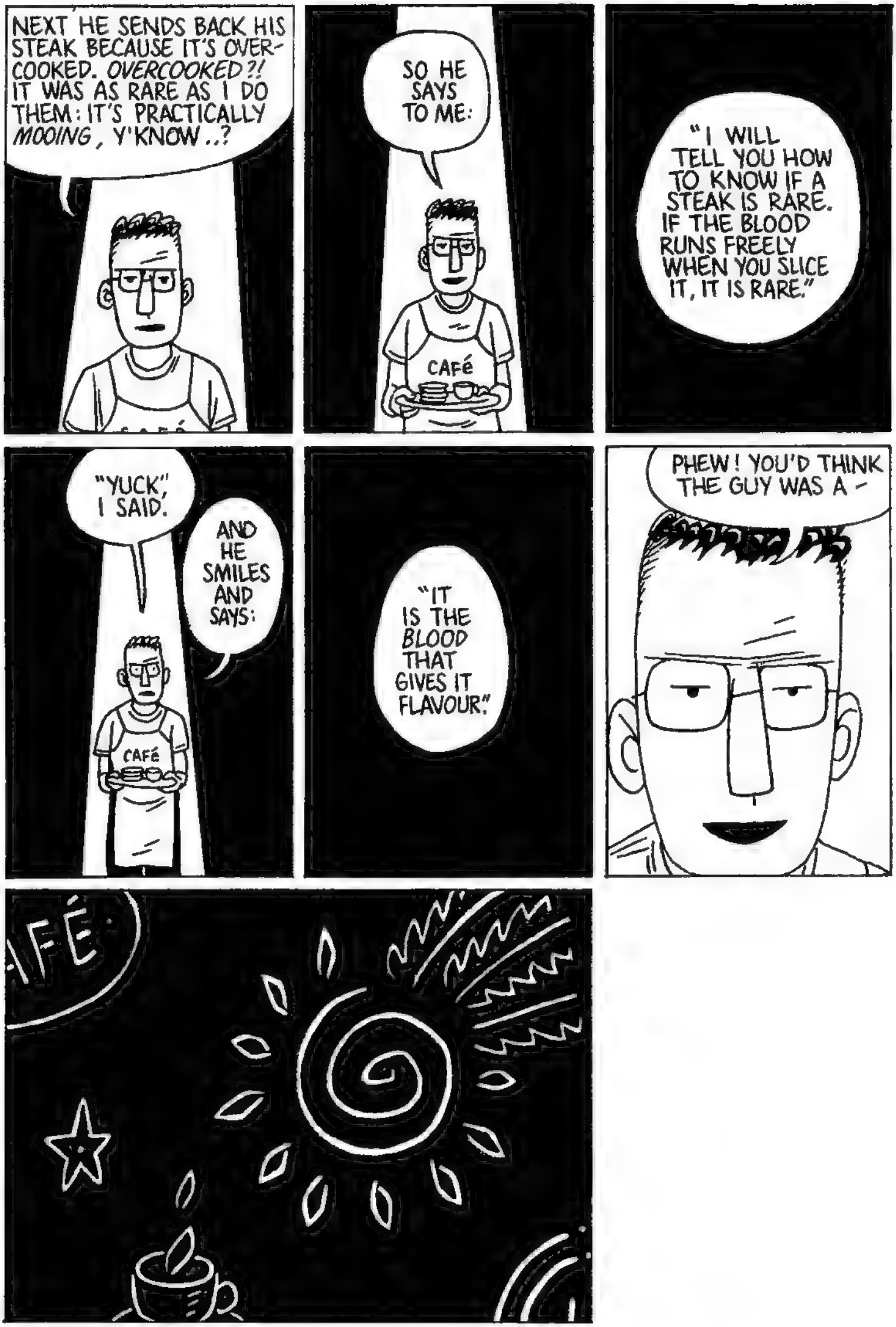

THE FINAL REVELATION.
A FEW NIGHTS LATER, 1:30 A.M., THE CAFÉ UNDERGROUND.
...AND HE HASN'T HEARD FROM HER SINCE..?
NO. AND HE'S DETERMINED NOT TO RING HER.
CAFE
CAFE
SPEAK OF THE DEVIL.
HELLO, LIZ.
HI. HOW'S IT GOING?
IT GOES. HOW ARE YOU? HAVEN'T SEEN YOU FOR-
I'M FINE. BUSY. I-UM-
ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE OKAY, LIZ? YOU LOOK PALE.
JUST TIRED. LIKE I SAID, I'M BUSY.

I'VE GOTTA GO. SEE YOU LATER.
...
...
WOW.
SOMETHING'S WEIRD.
THAT GABRIEL. HE SURE IS LUSCIOUS. BUT HE'S PRETTY WEIRD.
YOU'RE TELLING ME.
HI, VICKI.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
GABRIEL. LUSCIOUS BUT WEIRD. CAN'T ARGUE.
HANDS UP♪ WHO WANTS TO DIE!!
WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT GABRIEL?
HE'S JUST WEIRD. EVERYTHING ABOUT HIM. NO-ONE KNOWS WHERE HE LIVES, WHERE HE'S FROM, WHAT HE DOES FOR A LIVING. HE JUST TURNS UP ONE NIGHT AND EVERYBODY'S DROOLING.
RUM

HE IS DROOL-MATERIAL.
HE IS. BUT EVEN I FIND HIM SCARY. DID YOU HEAR THE CEMETERY STORY?
NO. WHAT?
BARNEY WAS WAITING ON SYMONDS ST. FOR THE LAST BUS HOME FROM WORK. SO HE'S SITTING THERE WHEN WHO SHOULD HE SEE BUT GABRIEL, STROLLING CASUALLY INTO GRAFTON CEMETERY, ALONE AT MIDNIGHT...
MAYBE HE'S VISITING THE STREET-KIDS UNDER GRAFTON BRIDGE.
ACTUALLY, THAT'S WHAT BARNEY SAID - PROBABLY SELLING THEM DRUGS OR SOMETHING.
THAT WOULD EXPLAIN WHAT HE DOES FOR A LIVING.
WHATEVER HE WAS DOING THERE, IT DEFINITELY QUALIFIES *WEIRD*. I'M IMPRESSED.
HAS ANYONE EVER SEEN HIM DURING THE DAY?
NOT THAT I KNOW OF.
EVEN HIS BEAUTY IS ODD - IT'S MESMERISING. JUST BEING AROUND HIM MAKES ME DIZZY.
YOU'RE THE SAME AROUND JAMES!
NO - I KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN. EVERYONE - BUT *EVERYONE* - WANTS HIM. AND EVERYONE WHO'S HAD HIM HAS ...*CHANGED*. PATRICE WENT REALLY QUIET AND NOW SHE'S TAKEN OFF TO HER PARENTS!

AND LOOK AT LIZ. I THOUGHT NOTHING COULD BREAK UP HER AND ALEX. BUT NOW SHE WON'T EVEN SPEAK TO HIM!
SHE WON'T SPEAK TO ANYONE. SHE WAS EVASIVE JUST NOW WITH US.
SHE DID SEEM ODD. PALE AND TIRED-LOOKING
TOO MUCH SEX. GOD, IF I WAS IN BED WITH HIM, I'D NEVER GET UP, AND FORGET SLEEPING!
NO, NO, WAIT A MINUTE.
WHAT?
THERE'S MORE TO THIS THAN MEETS THE EYE.
I DON'T GET IT.
GABRIEL. HE'S ONLY BEEN SEEN AT NIGHT.
SO? MOST OF MY FRIENDS ARE ONLY SEEN AT NIGHT-
NO, LISTEN.
ONLY SEEN AT NIGHT. NO-ONE KNOWS WHO HE IS OR WHERE HE'S FROM. HE HAS A MESMERISING EFFECT ON PEOPLE. HE VISITS THE CEMETERY AT MIDNIGHT. PEOPLE HE'S BEEN TO BED WITH BECOME WITHDRAWN AND UNDERGO A STRANGE TRANSFORMATION...

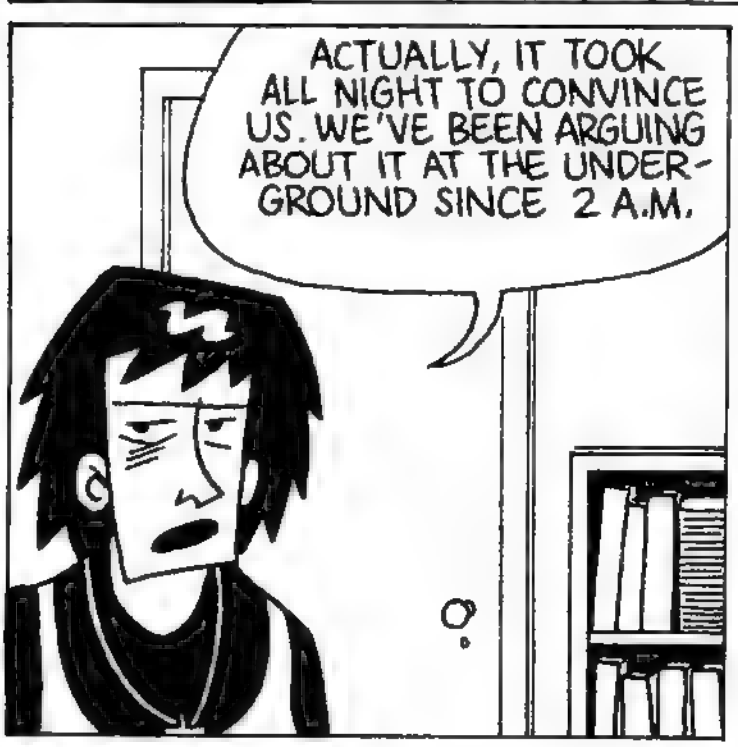

LOOK AT LIZ. ON TUESDAY AFTERNOON HER CURTAINS ARE DRAWN AND SHE STAYS HIDDEN IN THE SHADOWS OF THE DOORWAY.
TONIGHT WE SEE HER LOOKING PALE AND DRAWN. SHE ACTS UNCHARACTERISTICALLY AND QUICKLY SCURRIES AWAY WHEN SHE NOTICES GABRIEL WATCHING HER IMPATIENTLY.
LET'S FACE IT. THIS IS NOT THE STRONG-WILLED, FRIENDLY ELIZABETH WE ALL KNOW.
WHAT ARE YOU GETTING AT, ABE?
DID YOU SEE LIZ'S HICKIES? SHE HAD SEVERAL ON HER NECK AND THEY WERE NOT NORMAL LOVEBITES. THEY'D BROKEN THE SKIN.
AW, ABE, THIS IS CREEPY. COME ON...
NO, I'M SERIOUS. GABRIEL ISN'T NORMAL. IT MAY BE HARD TO BELIEVE, BUT I THINK HIS POWER OVER LIZ IS... UN-NATURAL.
ABRAHAM, GABRIEL IS WEIRD, BUT...
YOU CAN SAY THAT AGAIN!
CAFé
FIRST HE SPITS OUT A MOUTHFUL OF GARLIC BREAD BECAUSE IT'S GOT GARLIC IN IT.
LIKE, IT'S GARLIC BREAD, Y'KNOW?


NEXT HE SENDS BACK HIS STEAK BECAUSE IT'S OVER-COOKED. *OVERCOOKED?!* IT WAS AS RARE AS I DO THEM: IT'S PRACTICALLY *MOOING*, Y'KNOW..?
SO HE SAYS TO ME:
CAFé
"I WILL TELL YOU HOW TO KNOW IF A STEAK IS RARE. IF THE BLOOD RUNS FREELY WHEN YOU SLICE IT, IT IS RARE."
"YUCK", I SAID.
AND HE SMILES AND SAYS:
CAFé
"IT IS THE *BLOOD* THAT GIVES IT FLAVOUR."
PHEW! YOU'D THINK THE GUY WAS A -
-FÉ

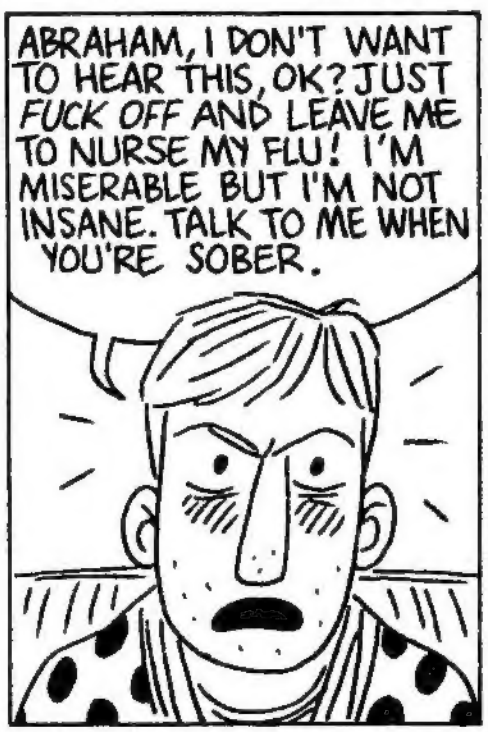
A WHAT?!

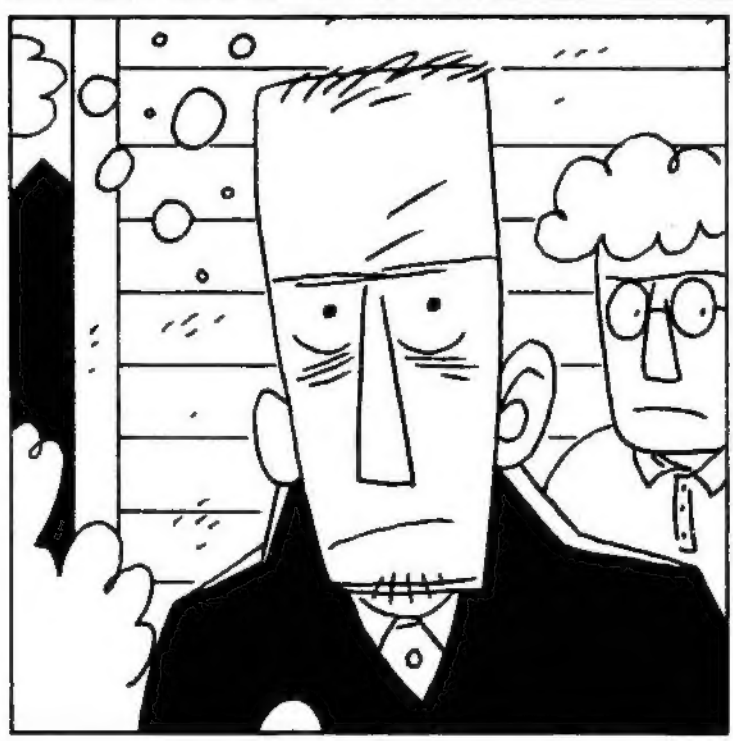
A VAMPIRE, ALEX. I KNOW IT SOUNDS RIDICULOUS, BUT-
IT *IS* RIDICULOUS! AND UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES I ALSO THINK IT'S KINDA SICK. I APPRECIATE YOU GUYS TRYING TO CHEER ME UP, BUT JOKES LIKE THIS I *DON'T* NEED.

WE'RE *NOT* JOKING, ALEX- REALLY. IT TOOK A WHILE TO CONVINCE *US*, TOO, BUT IT ALL FITS.


ACTUALLY, IT TOOK ALL NIGHT TO CONVINCE US. WE'VE BEEN ARGUING ABOUT IT AT THE UNDER-GROUND SINCE 2 A.M.

LISTEN. YOU'RE DRUNK. YOU'RE HALF ASLEEP. GO HOME AND GO TO BED. WHEN YOU WAKE UP, YOU'LL FEEL STUPID. AND SICK. YOU'LL DESERVE TO.
CEREBUS


ABRAHAM, I DON'T WANT TO HEAR THIS, OK? JUST FUCK OFF AND LEAVE ME TO NURSE MY FLU! I'M MISERABLE BUT I'M NOT INSANE. TALK TO ME WHEN YOU'RE SOBER.



TO BE CONTINUED...

Fancy nobody letting me know that you had a comic out on the other side of the Pacific... Managed to score No. 2 after diligently scouring Previews until it was offered up... Loved it: More, more!... Have been thrashing about (thru the mail) to stock a NZ comic shelf at my local comic shop, have amassed an impressive selection thus far. If you can put me on to anybody (or vice-versa), the kindly proprietor takes 10% of cover price, I take great pleasure (and a freebie) and request 5 copies for sale... Heaps happening here in NZ with that comics thang... Lotsa "networking" (god, I hate that term, wot ever happened to good old-fashioned "co-operation"? Did Sesame Street make it that uncool?) and general scrawling. Keep your pens and brushes up... will start the search for P3...

Tony Renouf
Dunedin, NZ

I certainly hope you've managed to find* PICKLE *#3 by now, Tony. If anyone in NZ is having trouble finding* PICKLE, *it is now distributed here by Propaganda Distributors (ph: 09-376-3078). Tony is the editor of* TREACLE, *and one of the best "cooperators" in NZ comics. So write to him now at: 266 Hillingdon St, Dunedin, New Zealand.

I know, it took me some time to send you something, but I had good reasons: we just finished an exhibition to introduce the second issue of BILL (that's the diminutive of Belgian Illustrators, someone told me).... Two weeks ago some New Zealand bands came to Belgium. The Headless Chickens played in Gent. I couldn't go because I was working at that time. Yep, worked as a cook (!!!) in a restaurant. I quit the job last week because I had no time left to draw and I'm fed up taking lousy jobs. When I arrived in Brussels and I took the tube back home, everyone was acting nervous and hysterically. The difference between the European and the New Zealand temperament is so big! There's an easy explanation for it: there's no space here. People are going mad here and they don't even realise it. I carried that serenity for a few weeks, but I lost it quickly when I worked in the restaurant. That's a pity, hope to find it back, though. Bye.

Virginie Van der Gucht
Sint-Fisters-Lesuw, Belgium

***We all hope you regain your serenity, Virginie. Perhaps a long swim at an isolated beach would help? Although I hear that's not so easy in Belgium. Good heavens! How do people stay happy there? Virginie is a charming and talented cartoonist from Belgium who visited us in Hicksville early in 1994. Her work can be found in* BILL *and in the fine underground comic* PERKOLATOR.**

Wow, the same first name. It's common as fuck here in counter-culture Berkeley. Anyway, I've been a fan since the early sixties, your music is so beautiful and it makes my heart get all funny. Thank you for never quitting smoking! I love you.

Dylan Williams
(after Drunk Welshman)
Berkeley, CA

Dylan replies: "Dear Dylan, I've always loved your poetry — it's so beautiful and full of lyrical power. And* A Child's Christmas in Wales *always made me feel so sad. Thank you for never giving up drinking although I'm sorry your wife had such a rotten time".

After many months alone at the drawing board I finished the first issue of my 20 issue (I hope) storyline. It lay around on top of one of my radio speakers for a few more months and only a couple of people saw it. I've started to get a bit discouraged with the second issue lately so I thought I should send some copies of number one off, just to make it seem like I'm doing something real... I think PICKLE's great. I love reading about and seeing New Zealand in the comic medium, and the feeling that you have your own self-contained reality which seems like New Zealand but more importantly seems real. I love the stories, I love the art. Thank you for PICKLE and I hope you don't mind seeing my first attempt at a full length comic.

Timothy Kidd
Takapuna, Auckland, NZ

Here in Hicksville, Timothy's comic* MY ANGEL WINGS *is on everyone's reading list. It's beautiful and lyrical; as a first attempt it's even more astounding. Order it now from him (I'm not sure what he's charging, but it's worth at least NZ $4.00 plus postage) at: 58 Northboro Rd, Takapuna, Auckland, New Zealand.

I can quite empathize with your overwhelment feelings at seeing yourself upon the pages of PICKLE #4 — please thank Harry very much, and it was one of the many treats of the issue to catch glimpses of you and he. It'd be lovely to visit Hicksville one day and discuss Tove Jansson's MOOMIN strip with you one day, of which I have seen very little. But also astonishing was the name Cook gave to his Banka parody; it sent me scurrying to a pile of comics in the corner of my room ("Doesn't

everyone?" Indeed, Mrs. Hicks) From which I removed a copy of the first ride of the Ad-Man. A remarquable coincidence, yes? Also enclosed is the second outing of YELL AND OLÉ, in which things become a bit more plotty and intricate. Perhaps — oh, I don't know — perhaps Danton would like a look... Finally, please pass on my astonished and thankful congratulations to Master Horrocks for the most beautiful and soulful cover to a comic book that I've ever clapped eyes on.

Bernard Caleo
Melbourne, Australia

I must say, Bernard, you would be very welcome here in Hicksville, and it would be lovely to show you our extensive collection of the MOOMIN strips (do you read Finnish?). In the meantime, I recommend to any one curious about Tove Jansson's masterpiece that they read the seven or so MOOMIN story books published in English by Puffin Books. The coincidence that Mr. Caleo writes of is that in his fine AD-MAN comic, there is a character with the name of Blather — a sign, perhaps, that the spirit of exploration evident in Captain Cook's comics lives on even now. Danton thoroughly enjoyed Mr. Caleo's newest comic (issue #2 of YELL OLÉ! — co-authored by Brendan Trolley), available from: Imaginate, PO Box 2052, Barker, 3122, Victoria, Australia.

Hey! Congratulations on your page in CLASSICAL PULSE! Do you still listen to Arvo Pärt?

Eric Searleman
Phoenix, Arizona, USA

Dylan says to thank you, Eric, and yes, he does. He listens to a lot more John Adams now, too. Eric is referring to a one-pager Dylan did for* CLASSICAL PULSE *magazine (published by Tower Records) in the latest issue.

THE Hicksville Hit Parade

by DEBS HAVERSHAM

This issue the Hit Parade has been selected by Debs Haversham, who runs the Hicksville Record Shop, recently returned from a visit to America.

Well, what can I say? There I was in Seattle, checking out a dying music scene and what did I find? A fucking *happening* comics scene! Not only were there all these great cartoonists everywhere, but man, they knew how to show a girl a good time! Thanks guys — I don't know how I can fit in a mention of everyone, so I'll just start off with:

ED BRUBAKER is one of the funniest guys alive and a SEX GOD!!! (I swear!) whose comic book **LOW LIFE** (Aeon) is just getting better all the time.

JON LEWIS is sweet, sensitive, adorable. So is his comic **TRUE SWAMP** (Slave Labor) — just about the best comic ever. How can you go wrong with an existentialist frog for a hero?

TOM HART is so laid back we kept having to wake him up at parties, but he's a very sweet guy that I could really go for (if he only lived more locally) His **HUTCH OWEN'S WORKING HARD** (US$4.00 from P.O. Box 95973, Seattle, WA 98145-2973, USA) is also the best comic ever — it's a bloody masterpiece, but Tom is already talking about doing something better. No doubt he will, too.

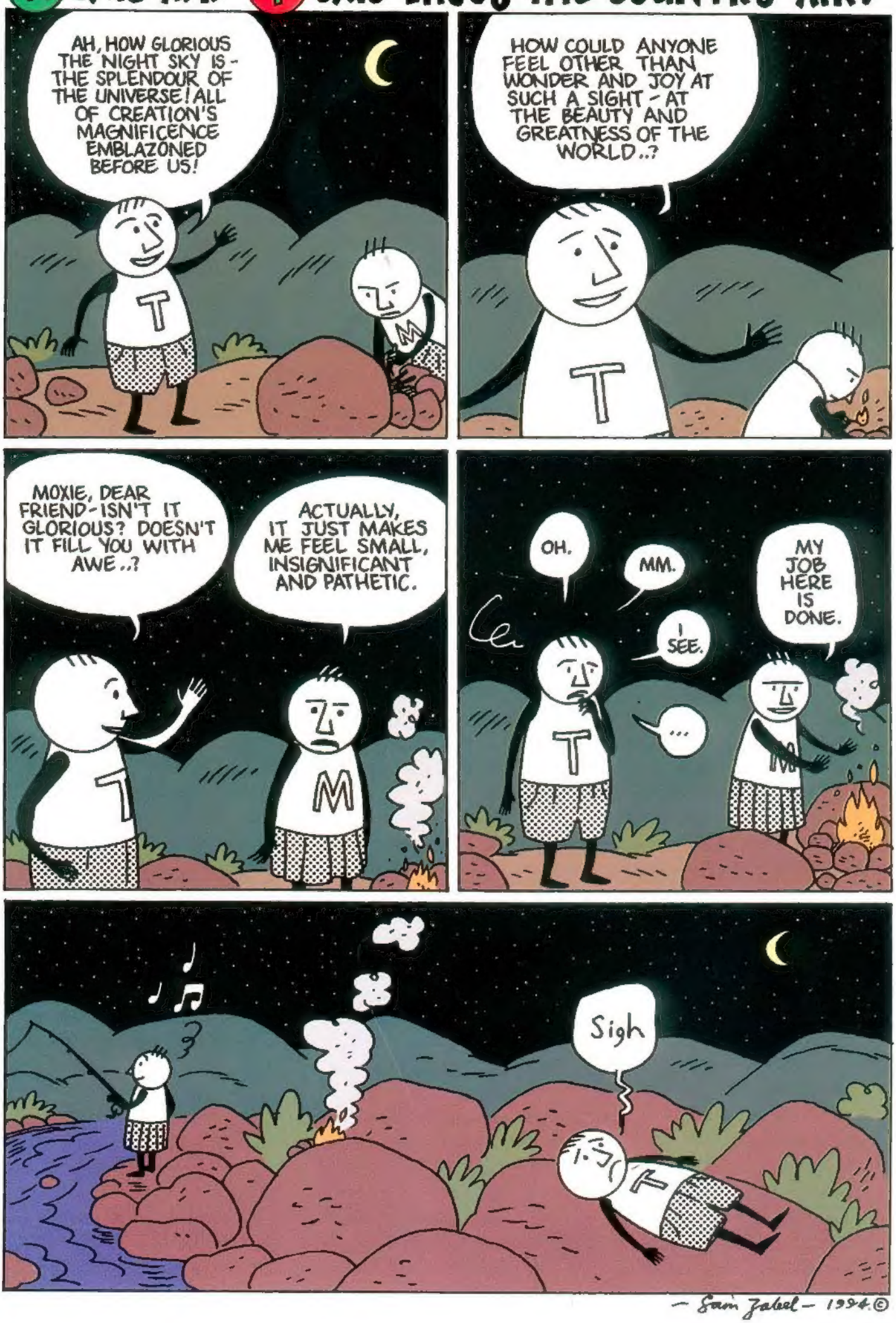
MEGAN KELSO does another irresistible comic called **GIRL HERO**, (High Drive) which pretty well describes Megan herself, come to think of it. SHE IS COOL! Read her comic and fall in love with everyone — forget Maggie and Hopey (yawn)! (Issues 1-3 are available for US$2.95 each. Write to: High Drive, 4505 University Way NE, #536, Seattle, WA 98105, USA)

JASON LUTES seems at first a nice, mild mannered fellow, but raging beneath that calm exterior is a SOUL AFIRE WITH PASSION; isn't there, Jason? I should know. The same can be said for his **JAR OF FOOLS**, volume one of which is being reprinted by **BLACK EYE** in 1995 with volume two to follow soon after.

Of course, Seattle also boasts people like **FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS**, **JIM WOODRING** and **PETER BAGGE**, but you all knew that already, didn't you.

Oh, there are so many! And I haven't even gotten to the cartoonists from San Francisco and the Bay Area, let alone New York and Phoenix. Mrs. Hicks tells me we'll have to wait till next issue for the rest. Until then, keep busy with these wonderful books.

Moxie and Toxie enjoy the country air!


AH, HOW GLORIOUS THE NIGHT SKY IS - THE SPLENDOUR OF THE UNIVERSE! ALL OF CREATION'S MAGNIFICENCE EMBLAZONED BEFORE US!
HOW COULD ANYONE FEEL OTHER THAN WONDER AND JOY AT SUCH A SIGHT - AT THE BEAUTY AND GREATNESS OF THE WORLD..?
MOXIE, DEAR FRIEND - ISN'T IT GLORIOUS? DOESN'T IT FILL YOU WITH AWE..?
ACTUALLY, IT JUST MAKES ME FEEL SMALL, INSIGNIFICANT AND PATHETIC.
OH.
MM.
I SEE.
...
MY JOB HERE IS DONE.
Sigh
— Sam Zabel — 1994 ©